



FAMILY STRENGTHENING MONTH

**A TOOLKIT FOR 2022 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
PREVENTION MONTH**

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Why Family Strengthening Month?

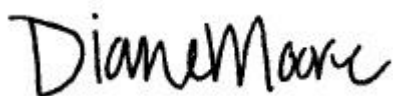
When we talk about preventing child abuse and neglect, it is important that we do so from a public health lens. Focusing solely on the belief of an individual family's failure ignores any societal or economic influence, and the potential for communities to take action to strengthen families to safely care for their own children. Data during fiscal year 2021 showed [9,062 children in Utah](#) were found to be victims of child abuse and neglect. Of the confirmed allegations involving a parent, 55% were related to a form of neglect.

High stress, substance abuse, social isolation, and lack of support in parents are among the most common risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect. [A study by the Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center](#) surveyed families across the country, with more than 2,000 from Utah responding between 2017 and 2020. Utah ranked worst in the nation for the number of parents who reported not coping very well with the day-to-day demands of parenting, and mothers who reported fair/poor mental health.

When we truly care about the safety and well being of children, then we must equally care about the safety and well being of the adults in those children's lives. This is why I love the focus on family strengthening in the month of April. When parents thrive in our communities and have what they need to live healthy, productive, economically stable lives — child safety is almost always concurrently achieved.

We want to do more in Utah than just prevent abuse and neglect. We want to back away from that line of crisis by leaning in as communities and neighbors in order to ensure that every family has the resources and support they need to be truly successful. This is the Utah way. Every child and individual matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Moore". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Diane" and last name "Moore" clearly distinguishable.

Diane Moore
Director, Division of Child and Family Services

Understanding the Protective Factors

Research has shown that families who demonstrate the following protective factors are better able to navigate difficult situations.

RESILIENCE: The ability to bounce back in difficult times. It means having good coping skills and self care strategies.

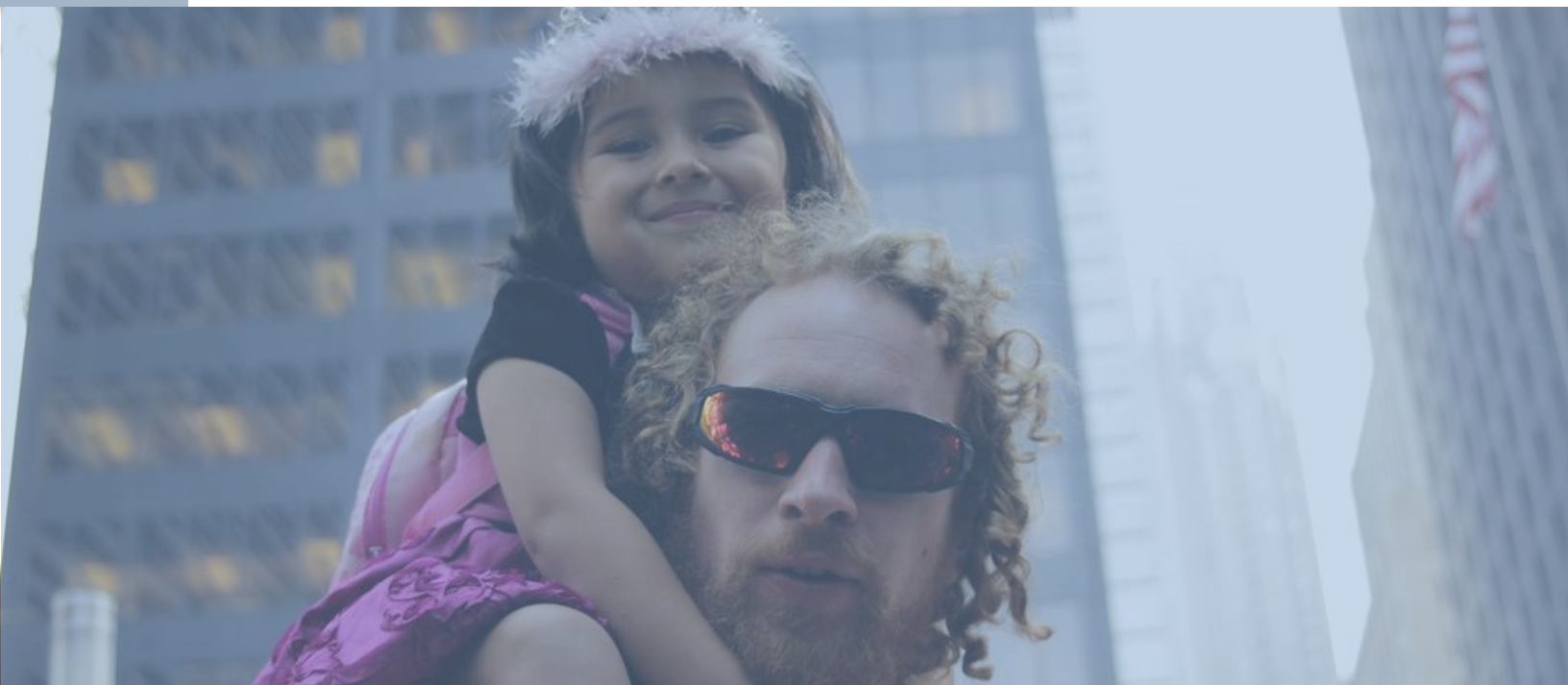
SOCIAL CONNECTION: Parents who have more support are more responsive to their children, have better overall moods, and experience less depression, anxiety and anger.

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING & CHILD DEVELOPMENT: No parent knows it all. Help is available to assist with parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN: Children's social skills and emotional skills are just as important as academic skills.

CONCRETE SUPPORTS: Services that can assist with things like housing, child care, and medical care help families manage stress. It's important to know where to find help, and be supported to take the step to ask for it.

Read more on each of the protective factors from the Center for the Study of Social Policy at <https://cssp.org/our-work/projects/protective-factors-framework/>



Key Points and Statistics

Use the following key points and statistics in your messaging this month. Outreach to your audience and partners should center around strengthening families to prevent child abuse and neglect. For assistance with data requests, contact DCFS PIO Sarah Welliver at swelliver@utah.gov.

UPSTREAM PREVENTION

- 9,062 children in Utah were found to be victims of child abuse and neglect during fiscal year 2021.
- Of the confirmed allegations involving a parent, 55% were related to a form of neglect.
- The majority of the families involved in the child welfare system are involved because of struggles related to job loss, finances, substance use disorders, and/or mental illness.
- Prevention isn't just about reporting child abuse and neglect. Moving community efforts upstream is about placing a focus on strengthening families to safely care for their own children, preventing the need for a call to DCFS.
- Family Strengthening Month isn't about ignoring the real trauma children in our communities are currently experiencing, it's about trying to prevent that trauma from occurring in the first place.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS & STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

- These five key strengths – parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and the social and emotional competence of children – help families cope with stressful or difficult situations.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

- Every community member and family member has an important role to play in preventing child abuse. It's often that first step to seeking help that's the hardest.
- Parent education, respite care, counseling, self-sufficiency programs, and assistance related to finances, housing and employment are available for anyone willing to ask for help.

Free Community Resources

All services are provided at no cost to families.

Family Support Centers of Utah

Family Support Centers strengthen Utah families by supporting parents, protecting children, and preserving families. Seventeen locations across Utah provide 24-hour crisis and respite nursery, information and referral services, and parenting and youth education programs. <https://utahfamilies.org/>

The Office of Home Visiting

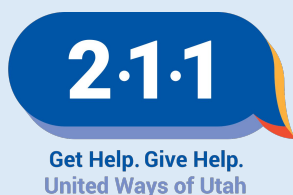
The Office of Home Visiting works with local agencies to provide home visits to pregnant women and young families who would like to know more about being parents. Home Visitors are well-trained and can provide information about breastfeeding, developmental milestones, toilet training, nutrition, mental health, home safety, child development, and much more. <https://homevisiting.utah.gov/home>

Help Me Grow Utah

Help Me Grow Utah is an information and referral helpline that helps parents, physicians, and providers find ways to help children grow and develop. They also provide mental health screeners for parents. Get help tracking your child's development for every stage of growth from pregnancy and to age eight. <https://www.helpmegrowutah.org/>

Prevent Child Abuse Utah

Prevent Child Abuse Utah provides home visiting in Weber, Davis, and Box Elder counties. Parent Educators provide support, education, and fun, connective activities for families with young children. Their statewide education team offers diverse trainings on protective factors, digital safety, bullying, and child sex trafficking. They are available for in-person or virtual trainings and offer free online courses for the community at pcautah.org.



For more information on resources in your community, please visit the new Utah 211 Strengthening Families web page at <https://uw.org/211/family-strengthening/>
If you would like to list additional resources, or join the 211 Database, please contact Utah 211 at <https://uw.org/contact-us/>

Help Spread the Word on Social Media

Raise awareness this month by sharing the following sample posts and graphics. You are invited to share posts to support community prevention and action. Don't forget to tag us and include the hashtags below so we can share your great work!

#FamilyStrengtheningMonth
#ChildAbusePreventionMonth
#ThrivingFamilies
#GrowingBetterTogether
@UTHumanServices

April is Family Strengthening Month. Find resources in your area to support parents and prevent child abuse and neglect. Visit <https://uw.org/211/family-strengthening/>
#FamilyStrengtheningMonth
#ChildAbusePrevention @211Utah

Abril es el Mes de Fortalecer a las Familias. Encuentre recursos en su área para apoyar a los padres y prevenir el abuso y la negligencia infantil. Visite <https://uw.org/211/family-fortenghening/>
#FamilyStrengtheningMonth
#ChildAbusePrevention @211Utah

Parents who learn to manage stress are more resilient during unexpected or hard times. Find resources to help strengthen your coping skills by visiting <https://uw.org/211/family-strengthening/>
#FamilyStrengtheningMonth
#ChildAbusePrevention @211Utah

Los padres que aprenden a manejar el estrés son más resistentes durante los momentos difíciles. Encuentra recursos que te ayuden a fortalecer tus habilidades de afrontamiento. Visite <https://uw.org/211/family-strengthening/>
#FamilyStrengtheningMonth
#ChildAbusePrevention @211Utah

Did you know early childhood experiences set the stage for later health, wellbeing, and learning? Find parent education tools, child development resources, and more at <https://uw.org/211/family-strengthening/>
#FamilyStrengtheningMonth
#ChildAbusePrevention @211Utah

Las experiencias de la primera infancia sientan las bases para la salud, el bienestar y el aprendizaje posteriores. Encuentre recursos de desarrollo infantil para padres en <https://uw.org/211/family-strengthening/>
#FamilyStrengtheningMonth
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Did you know 90% of brain growth happens before kindergarten? Find parent education tools, child development resources, and more at <https://uw.org/211/family-strengthening/>
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¿Sabías que el 90 % del crecimiento del cerebro ocurre antes del jardín de infantes? Encuentre herramientas de educación para padres, recursos de desarrollo infantil y más en <https://uw.org/211/family-strengthening/>
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DOWNLOAD GRAPHICS HERE

April is Family Strengthening Month

Find resources to help strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect.

SCAN ME

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH | Utah department of human services

Abril es el mes del fortalecimiento de las familias

Encuentre recursos para ayudar a fortalecer a las familias y prevenir el abuso y la negligencia infantil.




UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH | Utah department of human services

All parents need help sometimes, and that's okay. Find assistance with resources, child care, and more.

April is Family Strengthening Month

Learn how to help strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect.

SCAN ME




UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH | Utah department of human services

Todos los padres necesitan ayuda a veces, y eso está bien. Encuentre ayuda con recursos, cuidado de niños y más.

Abril es el mes del fortalecimiento de las familias

Aprenda cómo ayudar a fortalecer a las familias y prevenir el abuso y la negligencia infantil.




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Parents with positive social supports are more likely to seek help.

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Los padres con apoyo social positivo tienen más probabilidades de buscar ayuda.

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Did you know early childhood experiences set the stage for health, well-being, and learning later in life?

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